

CIA

## Internal Friction

Things are not going well within the CIA, and it is not going unnoticed at the White House according to informed sources.

Friction is common at various working levels at the agency, and what has evolved since the Nixon Administration took over is a classic battle between the "generalists" and the "experts."

Throughout its history, CIA has tried to play honest broker, fending off the sometimes biased use of intelligence by the Pentagon and State Department. All in all, it has been pretty successful. Sometimes, however, and with alarming frequency lately, CIA has not done well, showing up on critical issues as merely an "also ran."

### Experts Not Allowed to Speak

*Government Executive's* sources indicate that CIA's experts (and it has some of the best in Government) are not being allowed to speak. Many of the persons with indepth knowledge and virtually unassailable judgment and proven records of performance are simply out of the mainstream.

This is due largely to the fact that many of their substantive views are not in accord with the more conventional views of the management. The sources reveal that on many of the crucial issues lately—the SS-9, the ABM and Vietnam—the experts have had the guts to disagree with the popular concepts.

The management, however, employs the age-old bureaucratic mechanism of the conference to muzzle the experts. By this process everyone remotely concerned with a problem has to agree to the final version of a study.

The theory is to bring in the best ideas from everyone. The fallacy in this, however, lies in the fact that not everyone is equally capable or perceptive.

Sources state that lately what may have started out to be a piece of penetrating insight into a crucial question more often than not turns out to be a wishy-washy, "maybe it will" and "maybe it won't" type of nonintelligence. Some of the recent studies reportedly have covered every possibility 10 men can think of without saying just what it is that could really happen.

One of the reasons behind this difference of views stems from professional approach. First-rate analysts have built up an understanding of a problem through years of close association with it. They understand the nuances and background to the problem and, in effect, are capable of thinking like the enemy thinks.

In many cases this type of thinking defies conventional American logic. Vietnam is a good example. American

logic demanded that the Tet Offensive of 1968 was a military failure; North Vietnamese logic, on the other hand, viewed it as a success, and our sources indicate that analysts at CIA said so.

First-rate intelligence requires first-rate people, people who are unafraid of questioning the conventional wisdom and taking a stance. These are the people who should be making the intelligence judgments and not the senior officer present.

But, *Government Executive's* sources indicate that the management in certain production areas at CIA has cultivated a breed of generalists who have been elevated from analyst jobs to positions where their hard-gained expertise is soon lost. They adhere to the concept that a man worth his salt can do anything, and thus they have taken to shifting men to different management responsibilities over substantive production, with little regard for the man's preference or substantive skill.

Our sources, some of whom have been in intelligence for a number of years, are angry. They claim that the greatest single asset of the CIA is its people who know and understand a problem area. It is not, they claim, the so-called managers who would prefer to make generalists out of first-rate analysts.

### Young Staffers' Solution

Younger staffers with whom *Government Executive* spoke voiced similar complaints but have a different solution. They leave! They revealed that they came to CIA thinking of it as something different... apart from the bureaucratic world. But they confess that it's as bad as anyone could imagine—a gigantic bureaucracy.

Understandably *Government Executive* cannot reveal its sources, but can state that they represent a cross section of young and old from the CIA. They are not simply "cranks." most are dedicated professionals.

The primary purpose of intelligence in their view is to provide the President with sufficient information about a development in foreign affairs which will permit the formulation of a position or policy in time to effectively cope with the situation. In this type of situation, intelligence which warns and assesses the seriousness of an event before it happens is highly prized. Obviously the staffers with whom *Government Executive* talked feel this is not happening these days.

### Communication Needed

They report that the White House finally reacted to the kinds of intelligence the agency was issuing. Henry A. Kissinger, White House Assistant for National Security Affairs, now only wants the facts. Apparently he will make all the judgments. The CIA people feel that

this is a bit pretentious of Kissinger. He is not an expert in all areas of the world, they claim.

They hope that Kissinger and his staff will look into the problems within CIA, however. In their view, it would not take a great deal of effort to determine who the real experts are in the community and who the managers are. There should be communication between these experts and the policy-makers in the view of many staffers at CIA, but they are unable to do anything about it themselves.

James Smith, Jr. interview

MORI/CDF

1. Is there a significant body of analysts who have come to believe that CIA intelligence positions are being by-passed? If so, is this opinion centered in any particular group?
2. Is there a significant group of analysts who disagree substantially on major issues with agency or community coordinated national intelligence judgments?
3. Is there a conflict between the views of the "specialist" and the "generalist"? Between the "substantive expert" and the "intelligence supervisor"?